



AS-014916

CSL

33

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS C

Translated from the Sanskrit
by

DIXON SCOTT

with eight illustrations by

ZABELLE C. BOYAJIAN

3572

LONDON

FREDERICK MULLER LTD

29 Great James Street, W.C.1



CSL

FIRST PUBLISHED BY FREDERICK MULLER LTD
IN 1940

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
HAGUE GILL & DAVEY
HIGH WYCOMBE

C14916



Second Edition 1941

891.21 ✓
~~B51B~~
Sha N 40 B
28267

This book is printed from hand-set Joanna 12-point type
on Abbey Mills paper



DEDICATION

TO

BHARTRIHARI

My friend, I wonder if I'll meet you?
What's the gulf of the generations,
Or two thousand years? Ho! I'd greet you
With a handshake. We'd drink libations
To wisdom and love. They're the honey
We use in our market for barter.
We've nought to be bought for mere money,
All priced and inscribed on a charter.

The task I've had! Bringing to order
Your over-grown maze, so long after.
In new tongue to be the recorder
Of your depth, your twisted gnarled laughter.
If, over my shoulder, you've read it,
In your censure, I beg, you'll blend me
A little, may be, of some credit.
Fair's fair!

And, where I come, commend me.



CONTENTS

Introduction	page xi
Invocation	1
Part I: A Miscellany of Poems	5
Part II: A Dissertation on Fate	39
Part III: His S'Lokas here transmuted into Sonnets	51
Part IV: On Desire and Renunciation thereof	77
On His Taking Leave	93



INTRODUCTION

On picking up a book of verse entitled 'Bhartrihari Says', the reader's first query will naturally be: 'And who was Bhartrihari?'; his second: 'And why should what he said be of any interest?' The answer to the first of these queries was given as accurately as ever it can be by the Rev. B. Hale-Wortham, B.A., M.R.A.S.,* who said:—

'Who was Bhartrihari? what was his date? where did he live? did he, in fact, ever really exist at all? These are the questions to which no satisfactory answer has as yet been given. It has been alleged that he was of regal descent, and the brother of Vikramaditya; that not only did he belong to a reigning family, but that he was next in succession to the crown, and that, disgusted with the world, he resigned in favour of his brother Vikrama.

He is the reputed author of three Shatakas or centuries of couplets:

1. Sringara Shataka, a purely amatory poem;
2. Niti Shataka, on polity and ethics;
3. Vairagya Shataka, on religious austerity.

But beyond tradition there is no evidence whatever as to the authorship of these Shatakas. The theory already referred to, that Bhartrihari was a prince who quitted the world in disgust, is founded upon the somewhat vague allusions in the second Sloka of the Niti Shataka.† This has been supposed to refer to the discovery of a domestic intrigue in his own household, which so shook Bhartri-

*Rector of Eggesford, North Devon, at the time of his publishing a prose version of Bhartrihari's works in 1886.

†The second poem in this collection. Actually, the first poem after the Invocation to the Deity, which precedes all important Sanskrit works.



on the literature and lives of millions of Hindus, and have become part of the inheritance of the wisdom of their land. And surely Englishmen should know something of an Indian immortal? Bhartrihari, too, appeals to us with his humanity. He is not a sage like many, who occupy themselves so severely with the Absolute, with the subjugation of all desire and control of the senses, and disdain all the complexities of ordinary human affairs except to prove the non-reality of their existence. He does these things, it is true, in his more austere hours, but at any moment he may burst into a song of human rapture or pain. Thus it comes as a sudden joy to meet him amongst the ascetics, openly proclaiming the plague to his mind of worldly troubles, and their effect upon his outlook on life. His outbursts of passion and his sardonic humour are as fresh as though written yesterday.

Bhartrihari's verses are to be found, also, running in and out of the *Hitopadesa*, those wonderful old tales—

‘Which reached us through the Persian
And got an English version
When Richard first did deign him
To pulverise the paynim
To sanctify his vow’.

I find it surprising that, after three centuries of our rule in India, his name is still known to but a few Englishmen, and as I think he is well worth knowing, I have, as worthily as I know how, set his sayings into English verse. It has been a labour of love, and I hope not of ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’.

D. S.



on the literature and lives of millions of Hindus, and have become part of the inheritance of the wisdom of their land. And surely Englishmen should know something of an Indian immortal? Bhartrihari, too, appeals to us with his humanity. He is not a sage like many, who occupy themselves so severely with the Absolute, with the subjugation of all desire and control of the senses, and disdain all the complexities of ordinary human affairs except to prove the non-reality of their existence. He does these things, it is true, in his more austere hours, but at any moment he may burst into a song of human rapture or pain. Thus it comes as a sudden joy to meet him amongst the ascetics, openly proclaiming the plague to his mind of worldly troubles, and their effect upon his outlook on life. His outbursts of passion and his sardonic humour are as fresh as though written yesterday.

Bhartrihari's verses are to be found, also, running in and out of the *Hitopadesa*, those wonderful old tales—

‘Which reached us through the Persian
And got an English version
When Richard first did deign him
To pulverise the paynim
To sanctify his vow’.

I find it surprising that, after three centuries of our rule in India, his name is still known to but a few Englishmen, and as I think he is well worth knowing, I have, as worthily as I know how, set his sayings into English verse. It has been a labour of love, and I hope not of ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’.

D. S.



CSL

INVOCATION,

wherein

BHARTRIHARI

SAYS—



ori-1
CSL

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Om! Adoration to the Deity!
Undefinable Omnipotency!
The Fount of Universal Energy!
Infinite Intelligence Incarnate.

Lo! said the guru at whose feet I sat,
Thy essence is self-knowledge: Thou art That!
Seek for the key to thine own mystery
Within! Omniscience dwells in secrecy
In thine own heart. Without, what's that to thee?
Seek ye this 'I'. Drink at its source, and then
Thou wilt eschew the ways of mortal men,
Who come and go in millions without ken,
Pursuing joys transitory and gross,
Discriminating not the gold from dross,
Each building in his ignorance his cross.

Let them their false gods serve, but learn thou this:
Self-knowledge only is eternal bliss.



CSL

PART I

A

MISCELLANY

OF

POEMS,

wherein

BHARTRIHARI

SAYS—



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Fidelity, where find it in this world?

A pearl my wife I gave, of beauty vast;
She quickly to her paramour it passed,
And prodigal her charms to him unfurled,
While still she creeper-like around me curled.
To yet another woman he it cast,
Whose gently-breathing bosom held it last
To tempt me with such loveliness empearled.

My wife was I; I was she; so we loved.

A moment lost was an eternity
In which we could not brook our parted
lot —

And lo! a little time and it has proved

A transiency. Ah! where is constancy?
For even in myself I find it not.



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

✓
Wisdom was first begot from pain,
And put to use to cure its cause.
Men used it afterwards to gain
Their fill of lust beyond its laws.
Now there are none it homage pay,
Or sacrifice to serve it well,
So at the last 'tis gone away,
For now on earth it cannot dwell.





III

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Who would his ignorance conceal
In th' assembly of the wise,
And in it keep an even keel
With men in better guise,
Let him remember God has sent
A gift to hide his shame,
It is a priceless ornament,
And Silence is its name.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

These are the gifts of Hārī, the Lord of Desires,
The delight of the earth, to whom strike your lyres!
These are the gifts he bestows on favourite sons,
To be known of all men the happiest ones.

Well, but not rich, to be born, and of intellect sound,
In a house with its roots deep sunk in that ground.
There to grow handsome and strong with the years,
As a well-mannered man who can stand with his peers.
Cheerful in mien and in hand, with courage endowed,
A giver of alms which he bruits not aloud.
Honest in purpose and deed; forgiving in thought.
In the scriptures well-read; in evil untaught.
Strong to conform to his vows and the pledged word
When as hard as to stand on the edge of a sword.
Kinsmen to have without guile, a true friend to find,
A liberal master, an unharassed mind.
Blessed with a faithful and well-beloved wife,
A virtuous son, and a sweet end to life.

These are the gifts of Hārī, the Lord of Desires,
The delight of the earth, to whom strike your lyres!
Once in an age a well-favoured son
He exalts as a poet—may I be one!



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Make way! A constant man arrives to rule the world!
Invincibility is his who knows his mind.
He may in homeless plight from land to land be hurled,
Or softly bedded and in palace safe confined;
Wild herbs may be his food, or boiled and buttered rice;
His raiment may be rags, or flowing silken robe;
He may be praised or blamed, or tempted with a price;
His king may slit his ears, or ring with pearls the lobe;
His fortune may be great, or leave him but his tears;
His paramour may love or rave at him in wrath;
To-morrow he may die, or in ten thousand years,
But nothing can deflect him from his chosen path.

In constancy alone is triumph over foes,
In pain it is not weak, in pleasure not ensnared.
Its strength it draws whence strength illimitable flows,
And rises from defeat with courage unimpaired.
It crosses salty seas like ponds of lotus bowers,
Makes snow-capped mountains seem as pebbles in their size,
Makes wild and savage beasts as garlanded with flowers,
And, miraculous to say, will even fools make wise.
The firm and constant man, from purpose never bent,
The barren wilderness makes bloom where he has trod.
This conqueror of Doubt to shew our way is sent:
He is on earth the sign, the very will of God.



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Those men are good who succour other's needs,
And modestly conceal their friendly deeds;
Those men are useful who still give their best
While not forgetting their self-interest;
And those are demons who by strength or stealth
Consume for their own joy another's wealth.

But how name those of hell's alloy
Who for destruction's sake destroy?



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

What thing in all the world is most accurst?
Evil society. What loss is worst?
Failure in duty. What gives best increase?
The friendship of the good. Where's greatest peace?
In righteousness. In passing through this life,
Who's best beloved? The helpful, faithful wife.
Where's perfect happiness? At home, at hand.
What's wealth? Sound sense. What's royalty? Command.
What's freedom? Subjugation of desire.
What's beautiful? The music of the lyre.
Where's rage? In warring of philosophies.
What must uprooted be, that men have ease?
An evil minister, and a loose tooth.
And to the endless query, What is Truth?
My soul replies as with a divining rod,
Man's undivided unity with God.



VIII

CSL

BHARTRIHARI SAYS—

Of all the mighty race of fools there's one most hopeless
kind,

Who to the malefactor is most tenderly inclined.

These are the canting praters, the sham philanthropists,

Those ever-lasting idiots, the sentimentalists.

By words they would the villain from his evil path seduce,

And vent upon his punishers opprobrium and abuse.

Oh! pity 'tis that at this mark they give their wisdom halt,

For might not they with honey-drops make sweet the ocean's
salt?

Or charm with conch an elephant with passion run amuck?

Or from a serpent's poison fangs a healing nectar suck?

Instead, to crown their folly they add a heinous crime,

They put their slobber into verse, and set it to a rhyme.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Ha!

A bald-headed man, misfortune's child,
Was one day of his parasol beguiled,
And he, led by the guiding hand of fate,
To ward the sun-rays from his naked pate
Took refuge underneath a palm-tree's shade,
And there a scurvy trick was on him played.
For soon a ripened nut from off that tree,
Above just where he lay so restfully,
Fell stealthily, and on his bare poll smacked
So true and cunningly his head it cracked.

Ha!

Unlucky men need many a plaster,
Where'er they go they're sure to meet disaster.



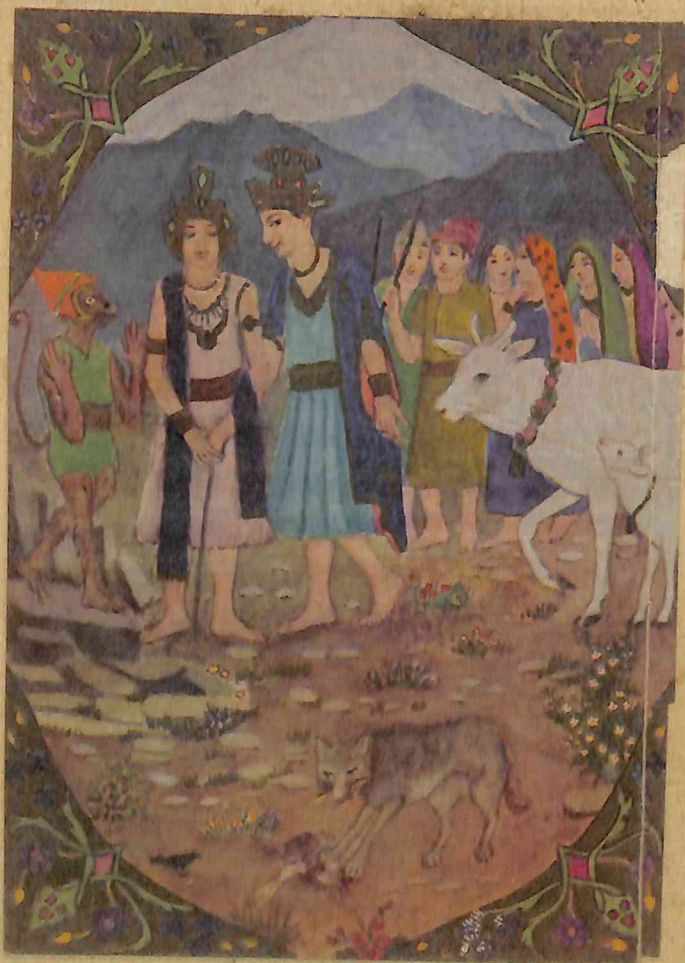
X

CSL

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS —

The lion may be wretched, old, and weak,
But rather than a carrion victim seek
Attacks an elephant with teeth and claws
To crunch his forehead in his mighty jaws.
Though fate fell him with blows he cannot fend,
A lion he remains until the end.

The elephant, unmatched in dignity,
His mahout must implore with flattery,
And soft with soothing words entreat
Before he gravely condescends to eat.
In passion or in calm reflectiveness
He is a noble, and will not be less.





The jackal eats with relish putrid bones,
And fills the shudd'ring air with snarls and groans,
Nor could he his foul scavenging ignore
Though he the king of gods should stand before.
His slinking mien his character attests,
A menial he, and he a menial rests.

And in the wheel of life what's plainer than
The innate disposition of a man?
The warrior is a warrior born. The knave
Lies straight when straitly he lies in the grave.
The miser schemes, while terrors round him press,
And never knows his treasure's worthlessness.

{ The man of virtue nothing can uproot,
He, even in distress, stays resolute.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Oh! what's in our birth, though noble it be?
To Naraka* send it, and there let it perish!
Let virtue decay, and honour us flee,
And let us our family nevermore cherish!
Our morals? Let them precipitous fall!
Let thunderbolts mighty our dignity shatter!
Let everything go, but ah! above all,
Our money preserve, and the rest does not matter.

How marvellous 'tis that in the world's mart
A man of high honour may keep all his senses,
His same noble mind and quick loving heart,
May live a life rigid and void of offences,
Yet strip him of wealth, and what is he then?
Why, quite a new person! The change is quite tragic,
He quickly becomes the lowest of men,
With metamorphosis completer than magic!

But (is not this strange!) if he be a clod
Devoid of all virtue and quite without merits,
Should riches befriend him as never did God,
All wisdom and beauty he quickly inherits!
The moonstone is dull, insensate, and cold,
But warmed in the sunrays it sparkles from zero,
And so in the glint of magical gold
We see a poor ninny shine forth as a hero!

*Hell.



XII

CSL

BHARTRIHARI ✓ SAYS—

No ornaments are bracelets to a man,
Nor strings of pearls, nor headship of a clan,
Nor perfect form enrobed in richest dress.
Nor flowers of evanescent loveliness,
Nor dancing girls in sense-allurement skilled,
Nor baths from essence of the rose distilled,
Nor wealth, nor jewel—decorated hair:
Though in themselves desirable, and rare,
These are but transient gauds, that come and go.
Where then is lasting beauty? Hark, and know,
He is bedecked beyond all excellence
Whose wisdom is adorned with eloquence.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Though princes' favourites may hold the helm,
Wise men, though poor, are rulers of the realm.
The fault of poverty lies not in them.
Their lords' ineptitude we must condemn
When gems of worth upon the foot are worn
And (counterfeits)
(base pretence) exalted. Let the scorn
Upon the sovereign rest whose lack of wit
Degrades the jewel whose full benefit
He yet may need. For ever is it seen
That, in a crisis, men, or high or mean,
Can not their inborn character conceal;
Stripped of veneer, they then themselves reveal,
As in the market base coin cannot pass.
A jewel still a jewel is, and glass
Is glass, though by the bane of ignorance
They gleam the same to th' untutored glance.



Yet is the poverty of learned men
A seeming only. Wherein lack they, when
The measure of their wealth is infinite?
Theirs is the only treasure! Does not it
The greater grow the more 'tis freely given
To those who cry for it, by Nature driven?
By prince's power it cannot be despoiled;
From robbers safe, and from decay assoiled,
It glory brings and blessings without end.
In distant lands it is a constant friend.
Where men of wit forgather 'tis a feast,
The man devoid of it is still a beast.



XIV

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

182 The man entirely ignorant is like a child,
And guided easily; the wise man, he is mild,
And easier still is led; but even God, 'tis plain,
Himself against the smatterer contends in vain.

3 A man a crocodile's great jaws apart may wrench,
Or with a giant serpent wrestle, and not blench,
Or swim thro' angry waves—but in the name of Fate,
What power can move the mind of him that's obstinate?

4 A man may press from sand a healing oil—or curst,
Or from a mirage drink when he would die of thirst,
Or from a fleeting hare secure a ghostly horn,
But him to guide the fool has never yet been born.

5 By water fire is quenched, the tree will shade the sun,
Wild elephants a hook will guide, an ox a stick, or none,
In sickness there are herbs, for poisons there are charms,
And priests with talk of heaven will soften death's alarms.

6 There is for every ill in Holy Writ ordained
A certain cure whereby sweet peace may be regained,
Wise men teach this to be a universal rule,
But ah! there is no medicine to cure a fool.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

The poet and the counsellor
Bear loads of care analogous.
Each seeks the gold within the ore,
And fines it from the overplus.
The vulgar thought they both eschew,
Accept no praise save from their peers,
And ancient truths they forge anew,
And test them in their bitter tears.
With toil and pain a revenue
They gather to uphold their state,
And art in words must both imbue
That speak they neither soon nor late.
The counsellor must reimburse
All secret ways to him unfurled,
The poet must distil a verse
From all the wisdom of the world.



XVI

CSL

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS —

The world is variously adorned in various places:
By relations who like each others' faces.
By poor men whose wise words count not a whit,
Or by the rich whose blather's holy writ.
By neighbours who pry not in others' houses.
By men contented with their ugly spouses.
By men who do not censure all their friends.
By those nay! here this endless story ends.



XVII

CSL

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS —

Ha! A man amorous in age
Is like the dog i' th' adage,
That wretched, thin, worn-out, and lame,
So deaf he cannot hear his name,
Without a tail to wag when glad,
Hungry, and with sores well clad,
With broken pot tied round his neck,
Sans teeth to bite—a broken wreck,
Yet egged by Love insatiate
With slouch pursues a fleeting mate!
Ha! Love, it has been truly said,
Destroys what is already dead.

28207

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

That woman! The jade
Whose every thought should be
Devoted unto me,
I now find she deceives.
She to another cleaves.

And, by his eyes betrayed,
That lover covets her.
'Tis so, by Jupiter!
Yet them can I impugn,
Since I am not immune?

For there's the sweetest maid
Takes pleasure in my ways,
And I her lips to praise
Will make a little song,
Or kiss them all day long.

Thus men are fools displayed!

Fie on that woman, and on him!
Fie on that maid, so lithe and slim!
Fie on the imp that plagues us so,
The god of Love—and me, heigho!



XIX

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Cease! woman. Cease
From shooting forth thy ardent glances.
Thy toil is vain; it nought enhances
Thy wayward fancy. 'Gainst thee have I toiled,
And from thy lure am now assoiled.
Infatuation's heat has left me.
Time was, not long since, when it cleft me
Like a sword. The world have I abjured,
And dwell now in a forest cave immured.
Thy favours are to me as withered grass.
Avaunt! and let me pass.

Peace! woman. Peace!
Remorselessly, unceasingly,
With shafts of love thou piercest me,
And in my trembling wounds I thee desire.
Thine eyes! Have they the sun robbed of its fire?
Peace, I pr'y thee! Peace! My youth has fled,
And yet thou plaguest me. Have I not bled
Enough to crave thee peace? How thy flame burns!
The more man tires of life the more he yearns
For beauteous women to attend him,
So soothingly to hell they send him.
Woman, exceeding marvel, haunt not me.
O grant me peace from longing after thee!



XX

CSL

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Kings and courtesans are ticklish creatures in their ways;
Were they not so chancy I might sing their better praise.
Now they pledge in warmest vows their love will constant
stay,
Then treacherous and false they turn, without a yea or nay.

Gentle now, and now so kind, they melt the trusting heart,
So that to-morrow's wormwood may its bitterest impart!
Merciful, forgiving, now, to crimes as black as sin,
And now revenging cruelly a scratch but on the skin.

Open-handed, generous, now even prodigal,
Now fisted close and coveting and miserly withal.
Seizing now good service as a famished man does grain,
And then, well fed, regarding it as grass that gives them pain.

Difficult is favour with a court or courtesan—
Tricks that bring reward one day another bring a ban.
Never do they pay the price of what they make us sell,
Bartering our freedom for their favour and their spell.

Now smiles a king upon the world, now wrathful runs amok,
A courtesan is now a rose, and now a mountain rock.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Poets in love and in glamour immersed
Praise woman beyond her true meeds,
Or by her slanderers she is accursed
For all of man's faults and misdeeds,
But secret have I for my private gaze
A woman whose form not a flaw displays,
And, far above beauty, in all of her ways,
She's just what a man needs.

Care at her threshold flies out of my mind,
I follow where'er she leads,
And swift in her bosom oblivion I find,
Whence ev'ry thought else recedes.
Fondly caress I the curve of her back,
Quiv'ring, she proves in her passion no lack,
Exultingly challenging Love's attack—
She's just what a man needs.



Softly her breathing brings ardour awake,
As zephyrs among the reeds.
Linked in Love's duel she'll give and will take
Till bliss on ambrosia feeds.
Soon all creation is us two alone;
Silent, her eyes close, then I close my own,
And the song of the spheres is her low, sweet moan;
She's just what a man needs.

Knowledge is wondrous, and Truth is serene,
And man in their service bleeds;
Life is a torment and ever has been
A winding stream choked by weeds.
Envy and malice pursue the great,
But I, undeserving, have got from Fate
A woman in secret, who, as a true mate,
Is just what a man needs.



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Now, squarely face the end of things,
And gain a name prophetic.
Say, evil counsel ruins kings,
And worship, an ascetic.

Say, doting parents spoil a child;
Good manners, evil habits;
That families whose girls run wild
Achieve esteem, as rabbits.

Say, wine to modesty's a foe,
As absence, to affection;
That pride knows all and still will know,
Except its own direction.

Say, ignorance condemns a priest,
And sloth slays agriculture;
That land by folly's waste decreased
Is soon prey for the vulture.

Say, homely good may bring a peck
Of evil in the cloister—
The pearl on my beloved's neck
Afflicted sore the oyster!



Say, Ganges falls from S'iva's head
On Himalayas' glory,
Then falls to earth and churns a bed
Of mud—and there's the story
Of wise men from their judgment hurled
Through giddiness in sinning.
For whom the pleasures of the world
An endless doom are spinning.



XXIII

CSL

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Now, these are pleasant riddles for the wise:

What may be bought, but never paid for?

What, nectar given, poisons him who buys?

What boon are women oft bewrayed for?

What is magnificent when little worth?

What wealth is that which wealth bewitches?

What, hidden everywhere, yet lights the earth?

Whose priceless gift himself enriches?

The first of these, a perfect work of art.

Next, mutual love; when spurious, hateful.

Then beauty, where demerit plays its part.

Then that for which the gods are grateful,

A poor man's alms. Great wealth, inherited,

Destroys the virtues whence engendered.

Truth lights the earth. The wise man's words, 'tis said,

Bless all—to him be homage rendered.



CSL

PART II

A
DISSERTATION
ON
FATE,
wherein
BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

When an elephant in bondage I see,
Or a wise man dwelling in poverty,
I think: How mighty is the power of Fate!
Who can its ruthless action deviate?

A man of virtue Fate brings forth,
An excellent true man, a man of worth,
And lo! it in a moment ruins him.
Alas! unreasoning is Fate, and grim.

A man may plumb the ocean, pearls to seek,
Or climb the Himalayas' highest peak;
He may be great in art, or plough the soil,
Or mount the sky on wings that feel no toil;
He may enrich himself in merchandise,
Or throw it to the gods in sacrifice,
Yet never shall that fail him on this earth
Which was for him predestined from his birth.
This is the law that shatters heaven's gate—
The gods themselves are in the hands of Fate.

Indra, god of gods, ruler of the skies,
Though guided by Vrihaspati* the wise,
Though he his foes with lightning's lance could pierce,
*The chief of the planets.



Or hurl the thunderbolt with anger fierce;
And though his soldiers were the deities,
And Vishnu even left his canopies
To join his force with might that none can tell,
And though high heaven was his citadel,
Airāvata the elephant his steed,
(So fleet of foot that none might him precede)
Yet He was vanquished: He, sublimely great.
How vain our work! Who can resist his fate?

Must Spring be blamed, the fount of energy,
When sap runs not within the leafless tree?
Or blamed the sun that daylight blinds the owl?
Or the hyena for his hideous howl?
By sacrificial fire or potent curse
Who shall his forehead's prophecy reverse?

Therefore must all men worship Destiny?
The giver of rewards so partially!
That, like an idiot, is inscrutable,
Yet is, God help us all, immutable.

Say nay! Let kneel who will, still will I not,
Though burdensome Fate makes the rebel's lot.
Yet will I challenge it with 'Why?' and 'How?'





And 'Wherefore is this written on my brow?'
Shall I, an entity, Fate's plaything be?
Though Fate pierce me with all its armoury
I'll not thus ignominiously submit,
Nor cease till I myself have conquered it.
One weapon only have I to that end,
And wielding it will I myself defend.
The potent force of Reason shall I bring
To harry Fate until from it I wring
The secret of its wanton fickleness,
That gives to wisdom pain, and fools largesse.

And hark! no sooner do I strike a blow
To free my soul from this consuming woe
Then exaltation deep in me abounds,
And in its echoes an old truth resounds,
Like clarion piercing through a mountain mist.
'Oh! list,' it cries, 'in what does Fate consist?
Where is a simpler law? It is the fruit
Of what has gone before; there is its root.
The hidden past conceals the mystery
Whence is derived all inequality.
In that, and in that only, can it be,
Or else the world is ruled by wizardry.'



But ah! what mortal sowed those pregnant seeds?
Were they our own, or they another's deeds?
Some say by others' sins we are bewrayed.
If this be true, let me with shame upbraid
The God that made us so! Omnipotence
Itself could not contrive a recompense
For innocence betrayed—a dastard deed,
From which, aye, even evil men recede.
Why, 'tis the nightmare of an idiot
That this majestic universe was wrought
In darkness by a Fool in masquerade,
That nobler than Himself his creatures made!

All Truth precludes such reasoning, god wot.
Came That-which-is from out That-which-is-not?
Wherefrom did justice in men's hearts arise,
Or mercy come to soften the assize,
If they be not in that whence we derive?
Does not the meanest animal alive
Protect and love the offspring of its loins?
Why then should God, whose parenthood enjoins
Sublimest Love, betray the innocent?
Let all cry Nay to such false argument.
Come! Let us rail no more against the gods.



It is not they that with chastising rods
Smite us capriciously for their delight.
The fault lies close, 'tis not in godly might.
Look to ourselves! For therein lie the roots
That in th' appointed time produce the fruits
To nourish us, or set our teeth on edge.
Fate here to freedom gives a faithful pledge—
It is self-knowledge that with radiant joy
Suffuses virtuous men; though Fate destroy
Their work, and harshly stultify their days,
They never fail to watch ahead the rays
That guide them onward to the final Truth.
In wisdom's satisfaction is its proof.

Life's daily resurrection we review.
The waning moon will wax, and will renew
Her matchless beauty in the velvet night.
The wise know this, and, when in woeful plight
Distressed may be, but never overcome,
And still will search for truth, though blind and dumb.
Though Fate pursue them with forgotten sins,
That more remorseless are than ghouls or jinn,
They still rejoice, for even as they burst
These clouds of ancient vengeance are dispersed,



And if not newly-fed at length they cease,
Revealing freedom and eternal peace.

✓
Thus wisdom raises us from bended knee,
To worship neither gods nor destiny.
To Work and Knowledge adoration give!
Be these our guide, and ever as we live
Look well to every act that we begin,
And think upon its end; for haste therein
Unloosens arrows that will pierce the heart,
Which cunning cannot circumvent, nor art.
Know this! that action is the source of Fate,
And knowledge is its guide. Nought can abate
The natural reward an act entails.
This is the law of life that never fails.
A man may be in thickest jungle lost,
Or circled by his enemies in host,
Or plunged in fire, or on the sea adrift,
Or eating guilelessly a poisoned gift;
He may be fast asleep, or may be mad,
But howsoe'er beset, bereft, or sad,
His good aforetime acts will profit him,
And bring him back from even Hades' rim.
This wondrous truth hear all who are inclined,



A righteous man the world transformed will find.

Look where he will, the man of wisdom sees
Energies acting upon energies,
Remorseless in the increase of their kind;
No sport nor variation can he find
That reason cannot fathom from its source.
Like breeds from likes, and nature runs its course.
Thus in Desire he sees the core of Fate,
The Perfect Wheel that men Luck designate.

Oh! he that walks not ever piously
To guard his state hereafter, now is he
As one that cooks the lees of sesame
In a cauldron of lapis-lazuli
Above a fire of richest sandalwood,
Imperilling his soul for paltry food;
As one who cuts a grove of camphor down
To fence a wilderness. These wear the crown
Of folly, but he that is enlightened
Seeks wisdom till his days come to an end,
And virtue practises as though, in dread,
He felt the clutch of Death upon his head.



CSL

PART III

HIS
S'LOKAS
HERE
TRANSMUTED
INTO
SONNETS,
wherein
BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

All men of music void, and poetry;
And beetle-minded men, who wealth amass
But make no sacrifice; and mortals crass
From gross desires and passions never free,
Encumbering the earth so plenteously,
Though shaped like men, not long-eared as the ass,
Though shorn of horns and tail, nor chewing grass,
Are lower brutes than brutes can ever be.

Far better wander in a mountain pass
With savage beasts, and shelter in a cave,
And live on roots dug out of earthy clods,
Than try to live in harmony, alas,
Where fools have right of speech to rant and rave,
Yea, even in the palace of the gods.



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Oh! wisdom is the lord of lords, a friend
To him who travels in a distant land,
Honoured among kings as the king's right hand,
Thence making prideful arrogance descend
To earth; and in its light we apprehend
That nothing can the scythe of Time withstand.
This stately universe, divinely planned,
All perishes and passes in the end.

The sun his measured course runs through the sky,
The earth is bounded by the ocean's tides,
Man's way is from the cradle to the grave,
All things within their limits move and die,
Save wisdom, that eternally abides
Within the Absolute . . . for which I crave.



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Innumerable rulers of this clay,

This clod, this earth, have drenched with bloody pain

Of fighting men each mountainside and plain,

Who happy would have been at work or play

But that their overlords set them to slay,

Another patch of Mother earth to gain:

Now all those kings, the common soldier's bane,

Eternity has plucked and cast away.

A monstrous paradox it is, that foes,

Implacable unto the very death,

But doff their armour and are friendly then,

Each army greeting well the other's men,

Nor would they waste on hate a single breath.

What is the answer to it all? God knows!



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

My palace with magnificence is filled,
With artfulness young maids encompass me,
Attacking me with all the armoury
That Venus in her daughters has instilled.
I am admired and wooed, since Fate has willed
My lands shall prosper as the banyan tree,
And they attend upon prosperity,
In hope to reap the ground which I have tilled.

But should the Himalayas throw a veil
Of wintry clouds my sun to overcast,
How chilled would be the ardour of those girls!
Their sweetly-honied tongues would learn to rail,
And soon their feet would run from me as fast
As from a broken necklace run the pearls.





BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

How rankles virtue in malicious minds!

The sage contemptuous is; the quiet, dull.

The valiant hero is unmerciful;

The pure of heart by art deceitful blinds.

The courtly man, again, his own axe grinds.

The noble man is proud; the staunch, a gull;

And so by innuendo they annul

All that is good, and sweet acceptance finds.

Why should distress on innocence be heaped?

Where'er I look, I see the world's a den

Where fish, and deer, and men as white as fleece,

Whose only wants are water, grass, and peace,

Are wantonly pursued by fishermen,

And blooded hounds, and tongues in evil steeped.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Glory, inspiring common men and lords,
Whose bosoms by her dulcet voice are rent,
A froward woman is, and impudent,
Whose lacerating nails are cutting swords.
She spreads her beauty lustrous with rewards,
Then she, in archery magnificent,
But strikes her bow, and all, in wild assent,
Leap round to her intoxicating chords.

What deeds will not her devotees essay?
They smite the elephant to cleave its brow,
Outstalk the wary tiger in its stealth,
Advance upon the lion, bold to slay,
And while they manfully fulfil their vow
She falsely burns to ash their youth and wealth.



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

He that has patience, what more armour needs?

An angry heart, what greater enemy?

A friend, what need to pray divinity?

Enlightened is, what power of darkness heeds?

Who reptiles dreads where writhing malice breeds?

Where pride afflicts, what loss can blindness be?

In shallow heads, where's hope of ardency?

Where alms sustain, what fear from hell proceeds?

But they who wisdom seek in joy or ruth,

Who give whate'er they can, though lean of purse,

Who love their kind, yet honour love before,

Who live in virtue by and with the truth,

Or make of poetry a perfect verse,

Enrich the earth with glory evermore.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

These gnarled old truths go hard against the grain:
 Troubles multiply in adversity.
 Gold leaves good men and clings to miserly.
On barren hills the clouds pour fruitful rain.
The poor man's purse the heaviest taxes drain.
 Kings undeserving creatures lords decree.
 Low-blooded men find favour with Lakshmi.*
Wealth, even murderers respect will gain.

As by a magnet drawn, our wives enjoy
 The company of scoundrels; lustrous-eyed,
 They fawn upon and fondle them, and thus
The peace of any household will destroy.
 Ah well! Still may the newly-wedded bride
 Make glad the heart-strings of the virtuous.

*The Goddess of Fortune.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

A man who from a frigid land had strayed
Told me of ice that would not break nor bear,
As, underneath the sun, I might compare
A tree that gave me neither fruit nor shade.
Analogy's thus best when homely made,
As one might say that teeth, and nails, and hair,
And likewise men, no more have beauty where
They're torn from place, and ugly are displayed.

And yet I think that all the world should know
Our olden proverb with its meaning wry:
That who on wealth founds his security
Is like one having fallen in the sea,
Who seizes on a serpent swimming by,
And neither dare hold on nor dare let go.



X

CSL

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

The men I see round me are three in kind:
The learned who through jealousy are blind,
The mighty who with pride are eaten up,
The ignorant content to bite and sup.
In fickleness their changing minds are torn—
To what good purpose were they ever born?
They are unquickened, blinking as the bats
That flounder in the gloom; or buzzing gnats
That flutter in the fig-tree of the world,
Till they into another life are hurled,
And so from age to age in love and hate
In fate's futility they transmigrate.
So rare is now the man of intellect
The sciences are fallen in neglect.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

In good men, Knowledge sublimates false pride,
In others 'tis to haughtiness allied.
His cave the hermit frees from passion's blame,
Or in frustration fans it to a flame.
A song may sweetly on the air be sent,
Or with lament fill all the firmament.
We hear on blessed days a sage divine,
On others quarrelling of drunken swine.
In vital youth we leap Elysium's shores,
In age we bend, and cannot cure our sores.
Now Fortune smiles, but when 'tis gone before
Disasters enter at the open door.
Ambrosia shot with poison is life's breath:
In Destiny no state abides but Death.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

A heart morose; a face lit up with pride,
A nature intricate as mountain pass;
A mind as fixed as dew on trembling grass;
A vanity the peacock never vied;
A succubus that mimes the gentle bride;
A jewelled comeliness with heart of brass,
That loves not what man is, but what he has;
That desiccates, yet will not be denied.

Such is the ageless, changeless courtesan,
The woman glancing through her half-closed eyes,
Who whips men's veins with passion like a flail.
I know her now, and yet—how weak is man!—
She still allures me to her paradise
That leads to hell—but will she there avail?



XIII

CSL

BHARTRIHARI SAYS—

The skies have many clouds, but not alike.
Some gently with their rain the earth caress,
The faithful toll of husbandry to bless,
And others fleecy float but fill no dyke;
While some with lightnings and with deluge strike,
To smite the humble peasant with distress,
By blasting hope of harvest-happiness,
Or rotting his good corn when ripe in pike.

And thus with men and gods! The stately moon,
Compact of nectar, must its lustre quench
On entering the sun's abode, forsooth;
And, seeking out a friend to crave a boon,
What valiant heart in pallor will not blench?
The bread of alms is bitter on the tooth!



XIV

CSL

BHARTRIHARI SAYS—

What ornaments are fitting to a man?

A noble's ornament is courtesy;

A hero's, gentle speech and chivalry;

A judge's, incorruption; in his ban

Of anger, an ascetic's; in the plan

Of wealth and riches, liberality.

A king displays his strength in clemency;

In loyalty the member of a clan.

The parent of all virtues is self-truth.

Each creature by its innate ornament

Is best adorned, as to its nature meet,

As female elephants when lean in youth.

If lakes of lotuses were innocent,

Would swans like fowls scratch in the village
street?

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

These things are thorns that prickle in my mind:
The moon obscured from me by light of day.
A woman whose allure has flown away.
A pond, of lilies destitute and blind.
A prince and miser, and the two combined.
An evil man at court, and holding sway.
A good man in distress, with Fate at bay.
All these are thorns, with others of their kind—

I writhe to see a handsome man a boor,
Of empty drumlike speech and vapid glance;
I hate those, conscienceless, who tax the poor,
The stores of lordly treasure to enhance;
And I would bring on all a vengeance dour
Who virtue ridicule, and live by chance.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

What's viler in the heart than avarice?
What's bitterer in venom than the gall
Malicious tongues distil? What things that crawl
Demean the coveter? Does hell's abyss
Hold demons deadlier than earth's in this,
That they our children lure in sin to fall:
Yea, they alone are masters, all in all,
In foulest cruelty and cowardice.

Eschew all men of wicked stratagem,
Who, tiger-like, are quick to flesh their claws
In victims who would seem for them elect.
When learned men are evil, flee from them.
A snake is not less dangerous because
Its head with precious jewels is bedecked.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Good men, who live in truth, have never need
Of penances, nor do the pure in mind
Need sacred bathing ghats. These men of breed
Give help in season and in stealth combined,
Proclaim their benefits derived from friends,
Give strangers cheerful hospitality,
Divulge no secrets to attain their ends,
Are self-restrained if wealthy suddenly.
When learned they need least, for men like these
Have earned the finest jewel to be worn.
They quickly reconcile their enemies,
And by their shining light the earth adorn.

When good men fall, they rise at break of day.
The wicked fall to earth like lumps of clay.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

The mind, as fickle as a forest ape,
Will not be silent, that my soul might tell
How evil came within this world to dwell.
No answer comes, while Death, in every shape,
Goes on his wonted course; and I, agape,
Know that Destroyer now, in image fell,
As Life's Imperishable Parallel.
The vine of Truth brews poison in the grape!

The frenzy and delirium of mankind
Bind them with ropes, and burn them with desire,
And blind their sight, and multiply their woes.
Enveloped in the phantom of the mind
Their passions make them kindling for hell fire:
Contented men enjoy the best repose!



XIX

CSL

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Divine Content! The well of perfect bliss,
Arising when the mind has cast out Fear,
Desire expelled, and Reason, crystal-clear,
Untinted by the dye of prejudice,
Sees Truth in strange and hideous guise appear:
That wrinkled hag in whom all joys inhere,
Whose mask dissolves beneath the lover's kiss.

Without the solace of philosophy
What man of understanding could endure
The evil wrought by men of wicked craft?
But wisdom brings its own tranquillity.
It works for good, and leaves to God the cure.
Contentment is the true immortal draught.



XX

CSL

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—*

Ah women! (Lucky those who)
(Who may put his) trust in them!

At one time women laugh, another, weep;

Are full of (glamour and of joyous cheep;)
(falsehood; even in our sleep;)

They are of all (delight)
(desire) the root and stem,

With (timid gestures,) artful
(cowardice, and crafty) stratagem,

And (soft slow) speech, (and rounded hips, that leap;)
(stupid) (and sluggish minds, like sheep;)

With (swelling bosoms, twinkling eyes that peep,)
(hearts of stone, and shifty eyes, but deep,)

And (bird-like)
(tight-lipped) mouths. They are the diadem

Of (all creation.)
(man's illusion.) Dear these damsels be!

They (are resplendent! Given all their dues)
(blind our reason, and our wits confuse)

They (are the crown of glory and of)
(lure in vain one who has gotten) grace.

*Bhartrihari, in common with writers of all times, rejoiced in playing with words of double meaning, as in his verses on women. These are, of course, impossible to translate into another language except by duplicate phrases, and thus something of the original subtlety is lost.



(What is a woman but a deity?)
(Anointed with discrimination, he)

(To worship her a man may not refuse!)
(Avoids them, just as he would never use)

(Nor from his heart her image can efface.)
(The drinking vessel at a burying place.)

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

The life of man endures a hundred years,
And half is spent in night; and for the rest
A while he is a child, then rides the crest
Of love in ardent youth, with sighs and tears;
Next, marriage-burdened, stung with scorpion fears,
Contriving with his debts to keep abreast;
While age creeps on, and on, and all the zest
Drips from his broken jar and disappears.

The teeth break, the steps fail, the body bends;
Sight dims, lips dribble, ears grow deaf or dull;
A wife rebels, and servants go their ways.
One friend the wrinkled actor still attends,
Who is both punctual and merciful,
And draws at last the curtain on his days.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

O mind! that canst the secrets of the stars
Divine, and read therein of hidden things
To prophesy the majesty of kings,
Their length of days, the issue of their wars;
Or plumb to hell, and wrest aside its bars,
Revealing genii with underlings;
Or cross the earth on swift aerial wings:
How comes it still one spot thy wonder mars?
That thou dost not, by chance or accident,
On God Almighty humbly meditate.
Dost thou then shun Him as thine enemy?
Or think'st thou thus His will to circumvent?
Nay, rather seek Him out both soon and late,
So that thou mightest gain tranquillity.



XXIII

CSL

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

To cleave the chords that bind me to Desire,

My home a sacred forest is, and here

My sole companion is a graceful deer,

That moves around in beautiful attire.

Fresh grass it eats; I, fruits; the birds our choir.

And, God be praised, of me it shews no fear,

For when I play it closely hovers near,

Attracted by the music of the lyre.

No lordly tyrant sets its strength to task;

It darts not here nor there to buy or sell;

It flatters not the face that it would curse.

Ah! could I speak its tongue that I might ask

What penance it has practised, thus to dwell

In harmony with all the Universe.





CSL

PART IV

ON

DESIRE

AND

RENUNCIATION

THEREOF,

wherein

BHARTRIHARI

SAYS—



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

As with a headsman's sword the setting sun
Cuts off our lives, unheeded, day by day.
In growth and love and pain time slips away,
And soon our brief allotted span is run,
Our little understanding scarce begun,
As though each man of us had had his say
On weighty nothings, then returned to clay,
With all his talents spent, and nothing won.
Intoxicated with the heady wine
That Love in all its myriad forms inspires,
We covet wealth and women, and we think,
Infatuated, 'This and this is mine!'
Thus are we victims of our own desires,
And nectar from the world's mirage would
drink.



II

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Desire, deluding, evil masks as good,
And with insistence not to be denied,
To every weakness of the flesh allied,
It hungers, importunes, and craves for food.
A swaying, rhythmic snake, with flattened hood,
Insatiate and never satisfied,
It gnaws us inwardly, and pricks our pride:
An adversary hard to be withstood.

I flee from it, but find it waits for me
At every turn, and slyly evermore
In voice and limb it wears a new disguise.
I drive it forth, but it, with flattery,
Returns, and, like the worm within a sore,
Secure within my foolish heart it lies.



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

It seems that first within his mother's womb
Of all right reasoning is man bewrayed,
To think his night and day will never fade,
And so unswervingly he weaves the loom
That is his fate, his torment, and his doom.
He mimics other millions, unafraid,
Till suddenly in every sense betrayed
He enters in the darkness of the tomb.

Thus I, and you. What have we not desired?
We worship Fortune with solicitude,
Well knowing that she favours but to mock
The same illusions find us never tired,
Nor is our confidence in them subdued:
Our folly is an adamant rock.



IV

CSL

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

The earth have I dug up its wealth to seize,
And smelted minerals; fierce serpents' stings
Have braved where they have writhed and coiled in
rings
To guard the treasure hid in cemet'ries;
Have wandered distant lands, and crossed the seas,
And suffered wretchedness of voyagings;
Servilely have conciliated kings,
And tortured inoffensive enemies.
And where has vanished all my dignity?
Of virtues have I boasted, in my sin,
To lordlings who had power to bring me low.
I have eschewed my pride of family,
And cast aside my self-respect; and in
A stranger's house have eaten like a crow.



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

A moth may fall into the candle's flame,
A fish the cunning-baited hook may take,
Yet all in ignorance; but, wide-awake,
We are entangled, knowingly, with shame,
In errors that are evermore the same,
Though hard to be endured. A leafy brake
Of cheating sense-illusion we all make,
And pleasure in its thicket is our aim.

But in the chase, has pleasure been our gain?
How soon it leads us in captivity!
How often is our enterprise destroyed!
We have not practised penance, ah! but pain
Has been inflicted on us poignantly
For all the happiness we have enjoyed.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

That swift, unyielding potter, Destiny,
The mind of man puts on the wheel of care,
And like a lump of clay revolving there
It shapes or shatters him despitefully,
And deftly smites him with calamity
And evils manifold; and subtly, where
It binds him in a loveknot, weaves a snare
Elusive and hallucinatory.

What cunning trick our certainty implants
In worldly things? That are, most plain to see,
Uncertain as the bubbles on a stream,
Unstable as the ears of elephants,
And are but ours as though ephem'rally
Inheriting a fortune in a dream.





VII

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Ambition spurred me on to worldly fame,
To glory, wealth, the homage height imbues;
And pride made me bestow my revenues
On friends who flattered and extolled my name,
Enjoyed my fare, before my wrath were tame,
And paid me back in coin of trashy dues;
All acting parts, my smile or frown their cues,
Involving them, and me, in equal shame.

My palace was a miracle of art,
With pools and cypresses and golden dome,
And beds of ebon and of ivory,
When, as of lightning shrivelling my heart,
My soul cried out and asked: When I go home,
Of what avail this grandeur then to me?



VIII

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Effulgent Truth all Ignorance consumes,
And, having seen the Light, I longed for it
To guide me from the darkness of the pit,
Where clashing men are choked by passion's fumes,
And Evil in its blackest aspect spumes.

Were mine the Universe, I every whit
In sacrifice would burn and deem it fit
To know the Soul that my dim soul illumines.

And hence came I my palace to forsake,
And as a weary burden cast aside
The riches that illusion made my own,
And now, where lotuses adorn a lake,
To virtue and the sacred Word allied,
I seek that which, when known, all else is
known.



IX

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

In earlier years, with apprehensions rife,
My days were long; or, covetously-thrilled,
They seemed too short to reap where I had tilled.
Each moment had its claims, each hour its strife,
And disappointments cut me like a knife.
So day to day my happiness was spilled.
When I hark back, with laughter I am filled
At recollection of my former life.

Now, Mother earth is my delightful couch,
The silver moon my lamp, the winds my fan,
My pillow moss, my canopy the sky.
The tiger of Desire, with hideous crouch,
Comes no more near my peace to ban.
Where does a sovran reign, if here not I?



BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

In every wood there is no lack of trees
 To give me of their fruits, to shade the sun,
 To clothe me in soft bark. And there is none
To say me nay. And here are harmonies
Of cascades cool and sweet. I bathe in these,
 And drink. And in the evenings there is One
 Whose silence sings His mighty orison.
The starry nights are still. I sleep at ease.

I have no fear of loss, no envy, pride,
 Or arrogance. And though, deep hid, unsolved,
 The Query in the heart escapes me yet,
I am to Peace attuned as to a bride,
 And now and everlastingly absolved
 From all the evils which mankind beset.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

At first, with trembling, I with penance sought
The secret that within the soul is hid,
When I to cease self-cruelty was bid,
And wisdom entered into me, untaught,
With all the majesty of freedom fraught,
And I, the primal elements amid,
Became a knower of the Brahmaid,*
And all the universe dissolved in thought.

O earth, my mother! Wind, my father! Sky,
My brother! Air, my consort! Fire, my friend!
With joined hands I cry that undeterred
And purified you will me keep, that I
Shall meditate on Brahman to the end,
And seek the shining glory of the Word.

*The wisdom of Brahma, the Creator.

BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—

Desire, the foe of sweet soliloquy,
Is like a mighty river in its flow,
Where birds are doubts that flutter to and fro,
And Love sings out her siren melody;
Phantasms supply the food of memory.
But in its Source a Voice I hear, and lo!
Suffused with joy ineffable, I know
All this is Brahman. All is ecstasy.

The breath within my nostrils is the breath
That men have breathed a thousand ages past,
The Very Life of One, the Life of All.
Be calm, my heart! no spectre comes, but Death,
Uniting me to Brahman at the last,
And ah! 'tis even as a festival.



91/CSL

ON
HIS
TAKING LEAVE,
BHARTRIHARI
SAYS—





BHARTRIHARI
SAYS —

CSL

My days are drawing to an end. So let it be!
This body, as incomprehensible to me
As the heat of the sun, the beauty of the moon,
Or its own energy, must shrink and perish soon.
Strange it is, notwithstanding that I live with it
And feel the beating of its heart, and, lacking wit,
Have much abused it, I know it not, so cannot ask
Why it is weary grown, and tiring of its task.
That it should mortal be, and brief, subject to change,
And I immortal am, is, beyond reason, strange.
Within my deepest mind no fleeting doubts contend
That I die not, as this life's medium nears its end.
Yet man must fear, and must in human weakness blench,
And cry in that dread moment which his life will quench:
'Lo! Here am I, and yonder is the Lord of Death.'
What plea shall I then utter with my dying breath?
I can but bear my head as firm as will allow
The many sins which I have furrowed on my brow,
And humbly say: 'You called for me, and I have heard.
'Lord my God, I am but a man, and I have erred.
'Have mercy upon me.' And I believe it true
That He will welcome me, and find me work to do.

28207